

uncritical in his use of evidence : it is better to say that he is unscientific. Often he estimates the value of an authority extremely justly, and points out its defects with great acuteness, but he does not do so regularly and systematically. His attitude towards his authorities is a little too much that of the advocate who cross-examines hostile witnesses very severely, and tears their evidence to pieces, but is careful to ask no awkward questions of those who testify on behalf of his clients.

Of all the different classes of authorities none need more careful examination than memoirs and autobiographies, and personal narratives of every kind. The net result of the scientific movement in history has been greatly to reduce their value as evidence about historical transactions. Macaulay was well aware of the necessity of circumspection in using this kind of evidence ; a story told in Trevelyan's Life illustrates this.

On the fragment of a letter to Mr. Ellis there is mention of a dream he had about his younger niece, ^f so vivid that I must tell it. She came to me with a penitential face, and told me that she had a great sin to confess ; that Pepys's Diary w^Tas all a forgery, and that she had forged it. I was in the greatest dismay. " What! I have been quoting in reviews, and in my History, a forgery of yours as a book of the highest authority. How shall I ever hold my head up

again? >"*

Most of these authorities, therefore, Macaulay does examine with considerable care, and scattered through his notes are estimates of their value as a whole or of the value of some particular statements they contain. Take as examples, first his criticisms of two memoirs of minor value, and then his criticisms of two of first-rate impor-